

BILL SUMMARY
1st Session of the 59th Legislature

Bill No.:	HB 1979
Version:	FULLPCS1
Request Number:	7557
Author:	Pro Tem Hilbert
Date:	2/21/2023
Impact:	Please see previous summary of this measure

Research Analysis

HB 1979, as introduced, imposes requirements with respect to agreements between vision care plans and service providers, and sets standards for reimbursement on certain pricing of materials or services.

The measure prohibits agreements between an insurer, vision care plan or vision care discount plan and an eye care provider from requiring that an eye care provider provide services or materials at a fee limited or set by the aforementioned entities unless the services or materials are reimbursed as covered services or covered materials under the contract.

The measure requires that insurers provide the vision care provider with a fee schedule that clearly lists the reimbursements. The measure outlines that reimbursements must be reasonable and must be calculated annually using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

The measure specifies that the time outlined by a contract between any insurer and a provider for reimbursement must be equal to the period of time allowed for any provider to recover any reimbursement amount from an insurer.

The measure prohibits an insurer from requiring more conditions for an optometrist than for physicians or osteopaths in order to participate in the provider network, and requires that services rendered by optometrists be provided the same reimbursement for covered services rendered by physicians and osteopaths.

The measure outlines steps an insurer, vision care plan, or vision care discount plan must complete prior to altering an agreement with an eye care provider. Agreements must not exceed 2 years or restrict the provider's use of optical labs or choice of material or service suppliers.

Upon violation of this act, a person adversely affected may bring legal action upon the insurer, vision care plan, or vision care discount plan for injunctive relief. The person may recover additional monetary damages.

The measure authorizes the Insurance Commissioner and the Attorney General to enforce fines, penalties, and legal action against violators.

Prepared By: Matthew Brenchley

Fiscal Analysis

The measure is currently under review and impact information will be completed.

Prepared By: House Fiscal Staff

Other Considerations

None.

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